

EASTERN COMMUNITIES PROJECT - EXTENSION PROGRAM OF INTERNATIONAL Y.M.C.A.

REPORT OF OPERATIONS

May 1963 to Dec. 1963

In April 1963, the Metropolitan Board approved the establishment of an Extension office of the International Branch at the Boulevard Shopping Center. Approval was also given for a one year trial period of Vocational, Educational and Service types of programmes as outlined in the International Branch submission to the Metropolitan Board.

The following is a report on operations of this Extension Program for the six month period ending Dec. 31st, 1963, together with an assessment of results to date and recommendations concerning future operation of the project.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS;

The extension office was furnished, staffed and opened during May 1963.

Announcements, both in English and French, were prepared outlining the scope of services available and the objectives of the project. These were distributed to all daily newspapers in the city, radio stations, television stations and eight community newspapers covering the eastern part of the city of Montreal and Eastern suburbs. All media circularized carried items reporting the opening of the extension office and gave varying amounts of coverage to the services available.

During the initial weeks the project Director, Mr. R.B. McFarlane visited individuals and agencies located in, or with various operations serving, the area. These included, industries, parish priests, schools and school boards, Federal and Provincial and Municipal Departments, Social and Welfare agencies, etc. Each individual contacted was given a brief written outline of the services and types of programme which the center was prepared to undertake and an indication of the types of projects with which the center would be able to assist.

In the period under review, a number of possible program areas were investigated.

SHOPPING CENTER;

A number of meetings were held with the Shopping Center Merchants' Association and managers of the various stores.

Specific programme proposals were made including; commercial courses ie Retailing for Store Employees, ladies day out, visits to the center and specific stores, educational services to store employees, etc. In each case it was not possible to get the minimum amount of interest and support necessary to assure some hope of programme success.

During the summer months it was arranged for "Y" examiners to visit the Shopping Center outdoors swimming pool. A number of children were tested and about 70 were awarded cards signifying various degrees of swimming proficiency.

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE:

An average of about 15 individual persons per month have been interviewed and wherever possible have been encouraged and assisted in their plans for personal improvement and growth. These are broken down as follows - 67% males, 23% females; of the total 33% were High School students; 53% were English speaking, 38% French speaking and 4% from other language groups. About 45% were referrals from Family Service and Welfare Associations; 30% from schools and the balance of 25% were from City Agencies, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., etc. and casuals. More than one third were from outside the eastern area.

ACADEMIC CLASSES:

In Sept. plans were made to start French and English language classes at the Center in October. Publicity was undertaken through the stores in the Shopping Center, by advertising in local community newspapers and through language class registration at International Branch. Although there was a reasonable initial response, the number of persons indicating a serious intention of enrolling was so small they were referred to classes at the Branch.

HIGH SCHOOLS :

For the past several months meetings have been held during the regular scheduled guidance periods of three classes of Practical Students at Dunton High School. Discussion covers such topics as student concern about home life, school work, vocational and career planning. In addition, the center provides film strips and printed material concerning vocational choice and conducts individual meetings with students who are planning to drop out.

The staff of Rosemount High School has been approached regarding a similar type of program, but establishment of such a project does not appear possible at this time.

SOCIAL AGENCIES:

At the present time a co-operative program involving two groups of youth is being carried out at the East End Boys and Girls Club. There are about 15 boys in one group and about the same number of girls in the other. Each group meets on alternate Thursday nights. This is a group counselling program consisting of discussion and field trips. Arrangements have been made for all participants to take a series of tests provided by the Applied Social Sciences Center of Sir George Williams University. To date more than half of all group members have completed testing.

POTENTIAL PROGRAM AREAS:

Juvenile Court; - A series of discussions with inmates of the Juvenile Detention Home regarding employment is tentatively scheduled to start this month.

Churches; - Possibility of leadership development and group guidance program assistance to English speaking churches is under preliminary consideration.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

A bilingual project advisory committee has been established. Three French speaking and three English speaking men with interests in the Eastern section of the city are serving on the committee under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Kabbash, a member of the International Board.

UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES:

Building space; - Space provided has been more than adequate and has not been fully utilized.

Professional Staff; - The Project Director has been fully employed investigating possible areas of service, planning, initiating, and directing program and other related duties.

Financial; - The budget has been adequate for programme requirements to date. No program possibility which came within our terms of reference and for which our other resources were adequate has had to be neglected because of financial limitations.

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE PROJECT:

- 1.) Involvement of French speaking individuals in program and development of contacts with French speaking groups has been very disappointing.
- 2) Changes in the method of academic grading, provision of increased guidance facilities by school boards and strict adherence to school board policy would indicate that our present "in school" type of group program has a limited future.
- 3) Group counselling programs together with individual Guidance and Counselling service and eventual job placement are recognized as urgent needs of the eastern communities.
- 4) The need for individual counselling and guidance is great. This type of service is time consuming, costly and beyond our staff resources.
- 5) Anticipated response to programs designed to provide even a limited amount of income has not been materialized.

ASSESSMENT OF OPERATIONS:

Within the limits of the terms of reference and resources under which the project was undertaken the following evaluation was approved by the Advisory Committee.

- a) Information regarding the project has been brought to the attention of individuals, groups and organizations in the community who might be interested.
- b) Establishment of services to or in co-operation with the shopping center personal is extremely unlikely.
- c) There is no immediate possibility of establishing revenue producing program.
- d) Development of "French" program will be a slow long-range project at best.
- e) Program development to date has been largely with the diminishing "English" population of the area.
- f) The approach to the Project has been sound.
- g) Program established to date confirms the need for Guidance Services in the area.
- h) There is serious doubt that results to date justify the expenditure.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In view of the above and taking into consideration other pertinent factors, the Board of Management of the International Branch makes the following recommendations.

- 1) No new programs be started in the area.
- 2) All current programs be run until completed in April or earlier as scheduled.
- 3) Such assistance as is requested be given to personnel at the East End Boys Club to enable their staff to carry out future group guidance programs.
- 4) Immediate notice be given regarding termination of the lease on the space at the Shopping Center.
- 5) A report on our operations and reasons for leaving the area be prepared and distributed to all persons and organizations associated with the Y.M.C.A. in the eastern section of the city.

- 6) All phases of the Project be completed, and the Project terminated by April 30, 1964.
- 7) The Metropolitan Program Committee consider the advisability and possibility of continuing group guidance programs in the eastern area and the possible use of this type of program in other parts of the city.

Respectfully submitted,

Basil Burgess,
Chairman,
Branch Board of Management.

Alex Kabbash,
Chairman,
Eastern Extension Committee.

January 22, 1964.